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Southern Cross

65th year, No. 50 Thursday, December 22, 1977

Published by the Diocese of San Diego, California; serving the Catholic communities of Imperial, Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego counties.

There will be no Southern Cross next week, Dec. 29. Readers will receive the half-yearly subscription envelope. Please respond promptly and make it a happy New Year!

From Lefebvre to 'Human Sexuality'

1977—year of questions for the church in a world of problems

By Nancy Frazier
NC News Services

It was a year of questions: Would the activities of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre lead to his excommunication or was reconciliation with the Vatican still possible?

Who would be the next missionary to be jailed, deported or murdered in southern Africa or Latin America?

DOES THE National Labor Relations Board have jurisdiction over Catholic schools or does it not? Would the Jesuits in El Salvador be murdered, as rightists had threatened, or could they continue their work in peace?

At the end of 1977, those and many other questions remained unanswered. As Pope Paul VI began his 81st year with increasingly frequent talk of his own imminent death, the church seemed to face many more questions than it could answer.

On the world front, 1977 was the year of the fifth world Synod of Bishops, convened by Pope Paul to consider catechesis for children and young adults.

AT THE SYNOD, the 204 participants expressed approval of modern catechetics (religious education), but urged improvement especially in such areas as the development of small communities, family and adult-oriented catechesis.

Also on the international scene, Pope Paul VI faced continuing headaches from suspended French Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, the traditionalist leader. Despite repeated warnings that such an action could lead to excommunication, the archbishop ordained priests and subdeacons June 29.

General absolution was the subject of controversy in the United States and England. While the American bishops took no official action on the subject, their counterparts in England and Wales attempted to persuade the Vatican to relax the conditions that now govern general absolution services which omit individual confession.

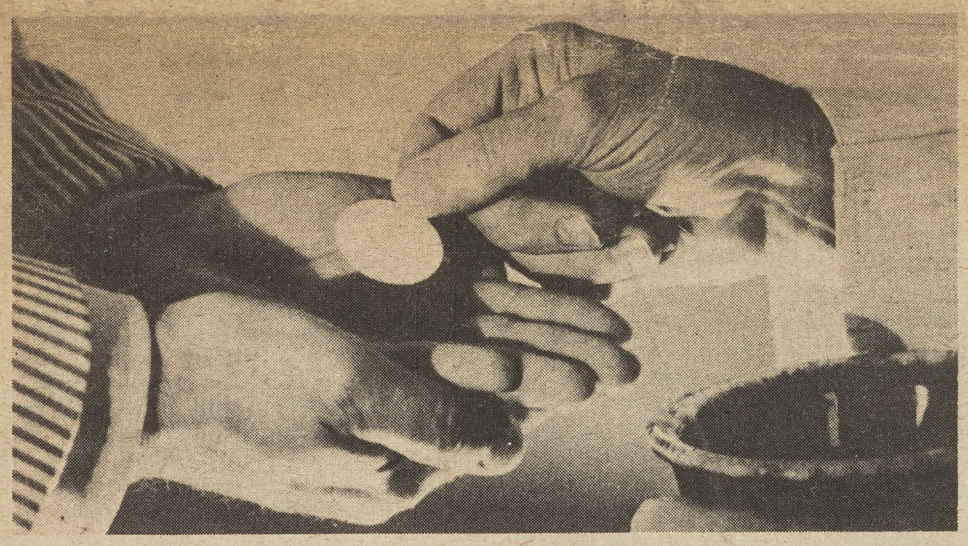
IN JUNE, American and Catholics throughout the world celebrated the canonization of Blessed John Neumann, fourth bishop of Philadelphia, as the first male North American saint.

Neumann's modern-day counterparts, the Catholic bishops of the United States, took several actions in 1977 which were likely to have a far-reaching effect on American Catholics.

In a vote so close that absentee voting by bishops not present was required, the prelates at their May meeting in Chicago agreed to ask the Vatican to allow the option of communion-in-the-hand.

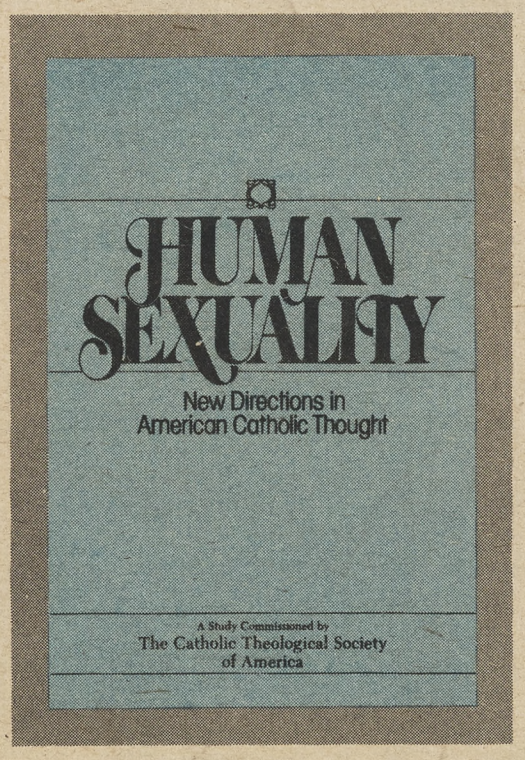


POPE'S 80TH YEAR—Pope Paul VI celebrated his 80th birthday but remained an active leader. In June he elevated six bishops to the rank of cardinal (top left), and he canonized St. John Neumann in a ceremony during which he kissed a replica of the Liberty Bell (bottom right) from the new saint's former see of Philadelphia. New doors for St. Peter's Basilica, a birthday gift, were blessed by the Pope (top right) in September shortly before he convened the fifth world Synod of Bishops (bottom left) in the Sistine Chapel. The Pope faced continuing headaches from suspended Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre (bottom center) who came to the U.S. to establish centers for his movement in New York and Texas.—NC photos









DEBATE AND DECISIONS—A new study by the Catholic Theological Society of America, "Human Sexuality," drew fire from bishops and theologians. Pope Paul VI granted the United States permission for communion in the hand. Energy shortages hit the headlines as a bitter winter forced lowered thermostats in schools (bottom left), homes, businesses, churches, and factories. President Carter stirred the ire of some Hungarian-Americans with his decision to return the Crown of St. Stephen to its native Hungary, a move supported by the U.S. bishops.—NC

THAT PERMISSION was received in late July and virtually all American dioceses had implemented the option by Nov. 20.

Also in May, the U.S. Bishops voted to lift the automatic excommunication of Catholics who divorce and remarry. That action had no effect on the church's refusal to allow divorced and remarried Catholics to receive the sacraments.

In November, the bishops approved the National Catechetical Directory, a document of some 250 pages which, if approved by the Vatican, as expected, will become the basis for all religious instruction in the United States.

MAJOR TROUBLE spots for the church were Latin America, especially El Salvador, Nicaragua, Chile and Argentina, and the white minority rule countries of Rhodesia and South Africa.

Catholic missionaries and lay workers faced persecution, expulsion and sometimes murder along with natives of those countries in their fights for justice.

—In El Salvador, two priests were killed, five tortured and 15 expelled in a continuing controversy over the church's involvement in land reform issues.

—In Nicaragua, the church also faced harassment, expulsions and murder, after U.S. Catholic missionaries denounced mass killings of peasant families by Gen. Anastasio Somoza's National Guard.

—The Rhodesian government deported Bishop Donal Lamont of Umtali early in the year, and in September arrested four officials of the Rhodesian (Catholic) Justice and Peace Commission, including an American-born nun, Maryknoll Sister Janice McLaughlin. Seven white missionaries were killed in the country in February by black nationalist guerrillas.

—South African officials used a variety of tactics against the church, which in February had issued a strong criticism of apartheid.

A major controversy in Congress this year centered on the Hyde Amendment, named for sponsor Rep. Henry Hyde (R-Ill.), which bans the use of federal Medicaid funds for abortions.

THE AMENDMENT expired in September and a continuation of the ban on federal abortion funding was attached to an appropriations bill for the Departments of Labor and of Heath, Education and Welfare.

A deadlock between the House and Senate on wording of the ban ended in December, when Congress adopted liberalized rules for federally financed abortions.

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), became embroiled in a controversy related to Catholic schools, when the U.S. Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in August that NLRB could not assume jurisdiction over Catholic schools.

HOMOSEXUALITY was much discussed in the church and outside of it during 1977, in relation to the publication of a book on human sexuality by five Catholic theologians and the defeat of a gay rights ordinance in Dade County, Fla.

The book, "Human Sexuality: New Directions in American Catholic Thought," went against traditional church stands in such areas as masturbation, premarital sex, and homosexuality. It was condemned by many Catholic bishops, and in November the bishops' Committee on Doctrine rejected the book's suggested pastoral guidelines.

In August, 1,100 Spanish-speaking Catholics in the United States convened in Washington to attend the Second National Pastoral Encuentro in August.

SEEKING WAYS to overcome what they called the "neglect" of English-speaking

Turn to page 8

TeleNews

The U.S. Catholic Conference Office of International Justice and Peace has agreed with President Carter's decision to **return the Holy Crown** of St. Stephen to Hungary.

The diocese of Belleville, Ill., has **"adopted" the diocese** of Brownsville, Tex., populated largely with needy migrant worker families, as part of its Christmas celebration.

The Maryland Court of Appeals, has voided most of the state's **anti-obscenity law,** saying that the statute "arbitrarily" exempts employees of pornographic movie houses from prosecution.

One way to solve the problem of massive migration of Mexicans is to **promote greater land cultivation** in the country, Cardinal Agnelo Rossi, prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, told priests and religious attending the National Mission Congress in Torreon, Mexico.

Catholic schools must come to grips with the **"complex but very real problem"** of desegregation, said Father David V. Sorohan, superintendent of schools for the diocese of Columbus, Ohio, in Momentum, a publication of the NCEA.



An unidentified woman sits in a fourth floor window of the Aquinas Hall dormitory at Providence College in Providence, R.I., as fire sweeps through several rooms. Seven students were killed and 13 injured in the early morning fire at the Dominican-run college.



A young man lights a stem of the Menorah—a Jewish candelabrum—at an interfaith Human Rights Day Observance in Louisville, Ky. Eight candles were lighted in the name of persons who have been persecuted for their faith.

The Vatican has condemned the establishment of a **dissident Ukranian-rite** parish in Halifax, England, and reminded the three priests who started it that they are suspended from their priestly functions.

Pope Paul VI said that the **cause of the Palestinian people** "ought to be given the most serious and generous consideration" in spite of "deplorable" Palestinian terrorist actions.

The approach used by the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) in an agreed statement on authority will, if followed through, "lead inevitably to that **visibly Christian unity** which is the whole aim of the ecumenical movement," said the theological commission of the English and Welsh bishops.

A Catholic lay group in Maryland has vowed to oppose "either by referendum or legal suit" **any fiscal 1979 state aid** to education that does not include "equitable distribution" of funds for nonpublic schools.

Archbishop Joseph Schmondiuk, the new leader of **Ukrainian-rite Catholics** in the United States, renewed the call for a partriarchate for the rite following his installation as head of the Ukrainian-rite Archeparchy of Philadelphia.

The Holy Shroud of Turin will be publicly exposed next September for the **first time in 40 years.** The shroud is traditionally considered the burial shroud of Jesus. It bears an imprint of a human figure remarkably like a photographic negative.

People

Bishop Charles B. McLaughlin of St. Petersburg has called for "six or seven years" of intense evangelistic efforts as part of "Project Evangelization," to be launched in 1978 to mark the diocese's 10th anniversary.

Father Egidio Vigano, 57, has been elected superior general of the Salesians, the third-largest Catholic religious order for men.

Father Jose A. Pineda and leaders of the Brotherhood of the Holy Interment in the town of Quezaltepeque, El Salvador, have incurred excommunication for ejecting their newly appointed pastor, Father Robert Van Den Henden, from his rectory.



Two boys glance at a British soldier as a Londonderry family heads for Sunday Mass.

Walter Cronkite, CBS News anchorman, has been awarded the "Earl Butz Bigotry in Media Award," for what the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights said was his biased and inaccurate handling of the congressional fight over funding for Medicaid abortions.

Father Paul Egli has been expelled from Rhodesia after having served a year's prison term for failure to report the presence of nationalist guerrillas.

Southern Cross CPA

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STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT
OF USE OF
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME
FILE NO. 77 14965

The following persons have abandoned the use of the fictitious business name
ROYAL SEASONS SAMOYED KENNELS
4739 Bermuda Ave.,
San Diego CA 92107

The fictitious business name referred to above was filed in San Diego County on January 16, 1975 and assigned File No. 75 0498

1. ROBERT EMMETT MORRISSEY
3163 Roadrunner Road, Vista, CA
2. Paula Theresa Morrissey
3163 Roadrunner Road, Vista, CA

This business was conducted by Co-owners, Individual.

/S/ROBERT E. MORRISSEY
/S/PAULA T. MORRISSEY

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of San Diego County on Nov. 4, 1977.

SC: Dec. 1, 8, 15, and 22, 1977

FICTICIOUS BUSINESS
NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO. 77 14966

The following persons are doing business as:
LITTLE CREEPS
at 3163 Roadrunner Rd.
Vista, CA 92083

1. ROBERT EMMETT MORRISSEY
3163 Roadrunner Road
Vista, CA 92083
2. PAULA THERESA MORRISSEY
3163 Roadrunner Road
Vista, CA 92083

This business is conducted by an individual.

/S/ROBERT E. MORRISSEY
/S/PAULA THERESA MORRISSEY

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of San Diego County on Nov. 4, 1977.

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SEMINARY DEDICATION—Bishop Leo T. Maher stands in the sanctuary of the new seminary chapel under the colorful cut glass windows, leading the congregation of 200 in prayer during the mass of dedication Dec. 16. The bishop blessed the new building which also includes a meditation chapel, dining hall, library, lounge area, and administrative offices.—SC photo

Seminary center dedicated for forming priests

Southern Cross Reporter

The new St. Francis Seminary chapel was filled with those most closely associated with its reason for existence at dedication ceremonies Friday, Dec. 16.

"We, God's people, are his temple. Central to all is the chapel, where we gather to listen, to know and to learn," said Father Francis Fawcett, seminary rector, in his homily at the mass.

THE READINGS referred to the "house of prayer for all people" (Isaiah) and, "You are God's building," (1 Corinthians).

And the very short Gospel extract from Matthew referred to that reconciliation which must be made, brother to brother, before approaching the altar.

The colorful stained glass, wood panelling and red tones of decoration gave a bright yet somber theme to the moment of dedication.

BISHOP Leo T. Maher, obviously pleased that the long period of construction was over, spoke of the "long journey of pilgrim people" as typical of the church.

He spoke, too, of Msgr. John E. Baer, former seminary rector, as "now in heaven" as the meditation chapel was dedicated to him, on the anniversary of his ordination.

Sharing the concelebration was Msgr. John Portman, who was ordained in Rome with Msgr. Baer on that day in 1956.

ANOTHER concelebrant was former seminary rector Msgr. William Bergin, while the other principal concelebrants were the young priests who comprise today's seminary faculty.

Parents of priests and of seminarians, members of the University of San Diego faculty and administration, priests, benefactors, and others associated with the work of the seminary were in the congregation.

And, as Father Fawcett pointed out, the chapel is surrounded by rooms "in which we study, work, recreate and eat. All radiate out from this central room of praise and thanksgiving which we call eucharist."

BISHOP MAHER spoke of his pride in the priests and seminarians of the diocese, and said that "the people of God are so supportive."

Catholic hospitals in diocese aid poor, pregnant women

Southern Cross Reporter

The president of the National Federation of Priests' Councils (NFPC) last month urged Catholic hospitals to provide free "prenatal, delivery and postnatal care" to poor women seeking an alternative to abortion.

But the three Catholic hospitals in this diocese are already providing such free care, according to officials of each.

FATHER James Rhatigan made his recommendation in a letter to Bishop Justin Driscoll, a consultant to the bishops' pro-life activities committee.

Mercy Hospital in San Diego, run by the Sisters of Mercy, is able to provide the most care of this kind to the poor because it is the only Catholic hospital in the diocese operating an outpatient clinic with obstetric facilities.

St. Bernardine Hospital, in San Bernardino, provides free medical care in financial hardship cases on a case by case basis.

St. Mary Desert Valley Hospital, Apple Valley, provides such hospital care when a staff physician is treating a patient who is unable to pay and requests hospitalization for his patient.

THE HOSPITAL is run by the Hospitaller Brothers of St. John of God, Brother Lawrence Eschweiler, executive director.

Father Rhatigan in his letter recommended that "an all-out effort be made by our Catholic hospitals to promote and publicize such free care."

But, as Robert Brown, assistant administrator of Mercy Hospital and director of its clinic, points out, "there is a limit on the amount of charity care available through the clinic.

"THE FACT that you have a clinic says you're inviting patients to come to you," Brown said. "And we can treat about 30,000 general outpatient visits a year."

About 60 percent of the people who use the clinic can't afford the entire cost of medical care provided, Brown said.

The clinic determines through financial screening what percentage of the cost the patient can afford, and bills the patient that percentage, he added.

IN RESPONSE to providing such care as an alternative to abortion, Brown said:

"We (Mercy Hospital) are pro-life. We don't do sterilizations, tubal ligations or abortions. Counseling is provided through the hospital's Social Services Department on the alternatives to abortion."

At St. Bernardine, San Bernardino, run by the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, its Social Services Department receives about 150-200 women a year, not necessarily poor, who call the Catholic Community Services "Lifeline."

MOST OF these women have not made a decision to give birth or not, and most are just looking for advice, said Sister Kathreen Redmond, business office director.

They are counseled, given a pregnancy test and the hospital does the lab work free of charge, the sister said.

Then they are referred to a staff physician, Sister Kathreen added.

BUT WOMEN would receive free prenatal, delivery and postnatal services if they are a financial hardship case and then only on a selective basis, the sister said.

For example, Sister Kathreen added, if for instance the MediCal limit for a family is $600 income and their income is $650, and they don't have insurance, then this is a hardship case.

Church in the barrio

Reaching out to meet human needs at all levels

Southern Cross Reporter

The church reaches out into the barrio in many ways, apart from strictly religious activities, serving the Hispanic communities.

This was made clear by Bishop Leo T. Maher when he spoke to the program "An hour in the barrio" in San Diego recently.

He explained some of the forms of assistance given to children, youth, older persons and families, and general community cooperation.

DEALING ONLY with the San Diego scene, the bishop told the Mexican-American group that in the barrio vicinity the church has three Catholic schools, helping in the education of about 1,000 children.

"While tuition is necessary for the continuation of the schools," said Bishop Maher, "scholarships are provided for those families who cannot afford full tuition."

He said that 'teen clubs in both English and Spanish are run at St. Jude Shrine, Our Lady of Angels and Our Lady of Guadalupe parishes.

ALSO AT St. Jude's is the program of summer activities with no tuition cost, offering English, arts and crafts and Mexican cultural activities.

Other programs for children include summer basketball at Our Lady of Angels, preschool activities at St. Anne and St. Jude parishes and weekend encounters (encuentros) designed for teenagers to help them in their religious growth and in family relationships.

FOR SENIOR CITIZENS, Bishop Maher said there are nutrition programs at St. Jude and Our Lady of Angels which feed more than 300 older persons daily. With these programs there are social and counseling services.

At the family life center in the area run by the diocese, there is premarriage testing and counseling for youth contemplating marriage.

In addition the center deals with marriage counseling for whole families with problems, and a special section for youth and their problems.

THERE IS ALSO participation in the activities of the Barrio Station and Criminal Justice Committee, the bishop pointed out. And all these activities are conducted in both English and Spanish.

In material assistance, Bishop Maher explained the programs which the church runs or helps which provide food, lodging, clothing and transportation for those in need, regardless of church affiliation.

He mentioned the crisis intervention programs for families in need of welfare, social security, hospitals and other urgent matters.

PARISH FACILITIES are made available throughout the area for such organizations as:

Filipino College Youth Group; Chicano Federation; Club America; Azteca Club; San Diego Adult Community Colleges and Alcoholics Anonymous.

In addition all parishes offer many other activities for the people of the barrio, he said, "but since these are primarily religiously oriented" he did not list them.

Assistant director for Charismatic Renewal

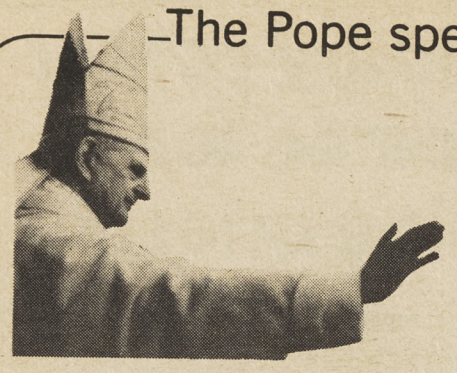
Father Albert Felice-Pace, a Dominican priest working with the Newman Center at UC-Riverside has been appointed assistant director for Charismatic Renewal for Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

Father Ralph Weishaar, OFM, is diocesan director.



HOLY CHILDHOOD WINNER—Alex Perez, eighth grader at St. Patrick school, San Diego, with the 10-speed bike he won for selling most Christmas seals for Holy Childhood, 214 books. Father Anthony Chylewski, diocesan missions office director, and Sister Kathleen Corbett, Alex's teacher, look on. The presentation was made at the missions office's Christmas party Dec. 17 at St. Therese parish, San Diego, honoring lay and religious educators in the diocese. Bishop Leo T. Maher announced that the diocese was fourth nationwide in Holy Childhood giving, a credit to Father Anthony and to the teachers.—SC photo

The Pope speaks



Christmas every day

Every day can be Christmas for us. We all know and believe that the real, true presence of Christ is offered to us not only at Bethlehem, but in every place where the eucharist is celebrated.

Christ offers another form of presence more humble and accessible to all—the poor and the suffering.

We find the greatness of Christmas in God's desire to become our colleague, companion, food, and bread, and to mirror through the poor, the sick, the imprisoned and the unhappy his crucified presence.—To a general audience

Transmission of the Word

Catechesis is precisely the methodical and effective transmission of the word of God. It is in receiving it that Christians can strengthen their faith and sustain their efforts of concrete and persevering charity.

That's why catechesis is the first duty of pastors. And that's why the church, with as much loyalty as respect, asks of civil authorities everywhere in the world, whatever the social and political regime, the freedom to accomplish its misssion, without privileges, but also without hindrance of any sort—To Vietnamese bishops

All peoples of concern

The Palestinian people are of particular concern to us, since among others they have suffered and are suffering most.

On various occasions we have declared our profound sympathy with them.

We consider that, in spite of the deplorable acts of violence with which their cause is at times proposed to world attention, it ought to be given most serious and generous consideration.

All the peoples of the Middle East without exception are of deep concern to us, for all are suffering, not only in the repeated armed conflicts but also through the continued effects of the unsettled situation.—To the new Syrian ambassador

A time to keep

by Michael Newman

There's almost too much going on

When we look back over the year, and many past years, the scene is one of ever growing activity within the church and reaching out from it. There's hardly a parish which isn't busier now than it was before. There are new ventures, new groups, new ideas which proliferate and burgeon into a church on the move. And on top of all this we are faced, in the New Year, with a vast and far reaching evangelization program under Father Robert Gavotto the Augustinian with a ready smile and a quick mind.

The post-Vatican II period has been called the challenge to the laity, giving them far more opportunities to fill leadership positions and exert influence where previously it was minimal.

However, there are some who think the laity have been "deserted" by a church too preoccupied with internal affairs. That's the news out of Chicago, where a Declaration of Christian Concern was issued last week over the signatures of 47 people claiming that "a generation of lay leadership may have been lost."

Calling lay people "Christianity's most effective force for transforming the world's political, economic and social institutions," the group warned of a "growing devaluation" of the ministry of the laity in today's church.

Have the laity responded?

The declaration makes the statement that, "In the last analysis, the church speaks and acts upon the world through her laity. Without a dynamic laity conscious of its ministry to the world, the church in effect, does not speak or act."

I think the signers of the document—which includes 12 priests and three nuns—may perhaps have been somewhat premature in their judgement. The age of the emerging laity, to my mind, has been marked by a reluctance on the part of the vast majority of the laity to accept the challenge.

Go to any meeting and you still hear the old warcry, "What's the bishop going to do about it? Why doesn't the church say something, do something?" And so on. It's always people asking "the church" to do something, but never getting around to doing it themselves.

There are many encouraging signs of lay participation in church affairs, and many thrilling ventures sparked by lay initiative. But we Catholics have been too long immersed in the old ways of expecting leadership to come from above to assume readily the responsibilities which we, as the body of the church, should assume.

Courage of convictions

A local story of three students who have the courage of their convictions concerns Susan Erzinger, Margaret Patton and Albon Rhomberg. We wrote about their withholding of student fees at the University of California-San Diego (UCSD) a couple of weeks ago because they do not wish to support the funding of abortions which comes from part of the fee.

As they were denied winter class enrollment by their action they have now filed suit against UCSD contending that they have been denied their constitutional rights. If only we had more people of principle, like these young folk, who would stand by their principles—and sacrifice for them—what a change we could see in many situations in life.

Too often too many people are just prepared to "go along" and "don't make waves", thus sacrificing their principles.

Ex-priest and facts

It was a pity that the former priest Robert E. Kavanaugh, now a psychological counselor in Encinitas, did not investigate what our diocese does for unwed mothers before he wrote a piece for the Los Angeles Times (Dec. 7). In it he castigated pro-life agencies which help unwed mothers, claiming that their attitudes "have scarcely changed in the last 25 years."

He accuses them of placing the mothers in a home where they are regarded as "sinners" and are made to do menial tasks as "fallen women". He finally says they allow the girls to "creep back home...babyless, but equipped with an alibi to explain her mysterious absence."

As Sister Barbara Welliver, who runs our excellent program, has pointed out in a letter to the Times, Dr. Kavanaugn could find what he seeks in the enlightened group home system of this diocese. The young women continue in school, come and go as they please, make decisions regarding the future themselves, and more than half choose to keep their babies.

"Catholic Family Services has operated a group home such as Dr. Kavanaugh envisions for the past seven years," writes Sister Barbara. "The emphasis is on personal responsibility, dignity and respect for the person."

Top stories and personalities

Approval of the communion-in-the-hand option for the United States was ranked as the top religious news story of the year by 49 diocesan and national newspaper editors who voted in a poll conducted by NC News Service.

We editors voted for 10 top news stories, and five top personalities of 1977. These were the votes for the top 10 stories:

1. Communion in the hand option approved for U.S.
2. Vatican reaffirms church tradition against ordination of women.
3. Medicaid abortions banned in many places, but Hyde amendment remains controversial.
4. St. John Neumann canonization honors another American.
5. Publication of and reaction to Human Sexuality book.
6. Automatic excommunication for divorced—remarried Catholics lifted.
7. National Catechetical Directory approved by bishops.
8. Women's Year Conference stirs debate over family issues, ERA, abortion.
9. Human rights becomes focus of national, international attention.
10. Synod of Bishops explores catechesis in modern world.

According to the editors, these were the top personalities of 1977:

1. Pope Paul VI, still active at 80.
2. Bishop John Neumann canonized.
3. The American Catholic Woman, embroiled in women's conference issues.
4. Irish Peace People Mairead Corrigan and Betty William, Nobel Peace Prize winners.
5. President Jimmy Carter spotlights human rights issue, born-again Christianity.

We were talking
by Enid Lanyon

As the morning rising

We were talking... about Christmas Eve and the birth of a child—about the young mother and the kind of person she must have been.

Mary is of great significance to Christians, and the understanding of her role and her inner disposition very important for every human being. There have been attempts, at various times in the history of the church, by over-zealous devotees to imbue Mary with an aura of divinity to set her apart from the rest of humankind. But her value for us lies precisely in that she was human.

NOTHING IN the gospel narratives is without teaching value. No incident or development in the life of Christ stands alone. All are inter-related, all are lessons teaching the one message. All are statements, re-emphases, of the truth the Incarnation was meant to communicate.

The conception and birth of Jesus through Mary, a young women totally dedicated to and accepting of God's will, contains in itself the whole teaching which Christ transmitted verbally and actively during his brief earthly ministry.

In effect, this vital event in human history states unequivocally, that only when a person is so fully aware of God's loving action in her life, that sin is repulsive and impossible, may the Word of God take root and grow to fulfillment and become flesh, for the salvation of the world.

JUST AS Israel was the one nation chosen by God to be his instrument, because in her the condition was right for the germination of the seed, and the fruition of the Word, so was Mary chosen.

In Mary, too, the conditions were right for the germination and the growing to fruition of the seed who was the Son of God. It was no haphazard choice. Born herself of saintly parents, her upbringing and personal development must have been supervised with unfaltering, loving attention.

The household which nurtured her as she grew to maturity, must have been so rich in awareness of God's presence, so fraught with the experience of his love, that any form of the rejection or denial that is the basis of sin, would be unthinkable.

MARY'S "YES" was not, I believe, a conquering of a natural instinct to refuse—her natural instinct could only have led her to a willing affirmative. Faced with the irresistible appeal of God's utterly faithful love—conscious of his incomprehensible goodness and tenderness—she could not have refused him without violating the very core of her nature.

In the face of that love, and torn by her own inability to ever requite it fully, she could not help but relinquish her life into the Father's hands—as her son would also do, in his own time.

And this is how it must surely be with all men. This is what Christ taught in his own life. Only when we come to know God and come to an awareness of his overwhelming love, his incredibly unceasing forgiveness and fidelity, and feel the anguish of our own incapacity to love enough in return, may the conditions develop within us which are right for the germination and growth of the Word of God.

IN CONTINUING faithfulness and surrender to him, we may make it possible for the Word to move out from us to others, to announce salvation to all mankind.

It was no arbitrary choice that caused Christ to be born in pain, with the issue of blood and water, any more than that he should die in pain, with the issue of blood and water. There is contained in this a deep symbolism of the human condition.

Blood and water are symbols of life-force and nourishment. Pain is the companion of change and transition, of self-abdication and transcendence.

IN BIRTH and in death, in suffering and anguish, for these two, mother and son, all was subject to God's will. All was an act of utter trust and donation. This is the way of Christian life, and the path to fulfillment and eternal life.

It is not an easy way, but it can be done. It has already been done, by Christ himself, and by the young girl who was his mother. There is no other way—if there were they would have shown us.

When we stand before that Christmas creche, let us recognize what it represents. Not a divine drama enacted by part-humans for our edification, but a showing of the way, the truth, the life. An enactment of the Christian convenental response to God.

The message of Christmas for us is that we are called to give flesh to the Word of God—our flesh. It can be done, and it must be done by each of us—for God's sake.



Opinion Forum

Educate for life by opening minds

I strongly agree with the policy of avoiding "strident language" in the abortion debate.

However strongly we feel about abortion, we must realize that it is a political question, and one does not change minds by calling someone a murderer—this includes the minds of our legislators.

People who take a pro-abortion position are not usually "bad" people, but are concerned about very real problems—the environment, the quality of life, deformity of the child, etc.

Obviously, the above problems should never be championed for the killing of the unborn, but those favoring abortions are thinking and doing what they think is right. They are not right and should be educated. But one does not educate by closing minds, only by opening them.

Nancy Brown
President and executive director,
The San Diego Committee for
a Human Life Amendment, Inc.

Charismatic joy and sadness

You caught the spirit of the Charismatic Renewal conference in your issue of Dec. 1, with the several articles and all the pictures. Thank you!

I was struck by the contrast of the joy on your front page and the letter from JR in the Opinion Forum. The anger, resentment and rigidity he expressed made me sad.

I can empathize with those feelings as I used to feel the same way before Vatican II. The Charismatic Renewal came along later and helped to deepen my relationship with the Lord.

Perhaps Father Ralph Weishaar, OFM, could write an article every month of so to help people learn what the Charismatic Renewal is all about.

For JR and many others the "old way" spelled spiritual security. As long as you followed the rules you were a good Christian. There are those who think the church went down the drain the day they took away the penalty for eating meat on Friday!

The renewal focuses on our relationships with each other, as well as God, and stresses the importance of learning to love one another. In seeking first his kingdom, we put right order into our lives and joy and peace will follow.

Mrs. Alice R. Newton
El Cajon

Holy days honoring Mary

You posed the question in your editorial of Dec. 1, "Are three holy days of obligation (out of six) honoring Our Lady too much?" You sir, are "too much!"

I cannot imagine anything that would please Christ more then having his mother honored. Our nation, under her patronage, needs her loving care more than ever before.

To quote an excellent parish bulletin and G. K. Chesterton, "...it was like chipping away the Madonna statue and expecting the Infant to remain suspended in air."

Chip away Mary and you destroy Christ's link with history and man."

Gwen Kosmicki
Imperial Beach

Sing and shouting

Latin's gone, peace is too.
Singing and shouting from every pew.
Altar's turned around, priest is too.
Commentator's yelling, "page 22."
Communion rail's going,
stand up straight.
Kneeling suddenly went out of date.
Processions are forming in every aisle.
Salvation's organized single file.
Rosaries are out,
Psalms are in.
Hardly ever hear a word against sin.
Listen to the lector,
hear how he reads.
Please stop rattling them rosary beads.
Padre looks puzzled,
doesn't know his part.
Used to know the whole deal in Latin,
by heart.
I hope all the changes
are just about done,
That they don't drop Bingo
before I've won.

Joseph V. Jacoby
San Diego

Sabbath on Sunday and Saturday

All honor to the group of Catholic priests and nuns who so kindly directed the Los Angeles Commission on Jewry's exhibit at the Convention Center in November (SC, Dec. 8), on Saturdays.

However, may I kindly point out that it is not correct to designate Saturday as "the Jewish Sabbath," even though some Jews observe that day, any more than marriage or monogamy should be called "Jewish".

Our Lord and his apostles all observed the seventh-day Sabbath, and never observed Sunday, even after the resurrection.

A recent doctoral dissertation by Samuele Bacchiochi, summa cum laude graduate of the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, concludes that Sunday observance completely lacks both biblical and apostolic authority, having originated not in the apostolic community at Jerusalem, but over a century after the death of the apostles in the community at Rome.

The motivations that led to the substitution of Sunday for the Sabbath, Dr. Bacchiochi points out, were social, political, and pagan.

Dr. Bacchiochi received a gold medal from Pope Paul VI.

It is correct to designate Saturday as the Christian Sabbath.

Robert J. Nieland
Seventh-Day Adventist Church
Chula Vista

Letters should be addressed to Opinion Forum, Southern Cross, P.O. Box 81869, San Diego, CA 92138. Letter must be signed, but name of sender will be withheld on request. Unsigned letters will not be published. Writers are asked to keep their views within 200 words.

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In Loving Memory

Into Thy hands, O Lord, we commend the spirits of these beloved ones who are gone before us into the realm of Thy eternal happiness and peace. – Amen.

HADEN, Jack M. Son of Genevieve Haden, brother of Pat Hood, Janet Lynn, Richard and Tom Haden. Requiem Mass, Dec. 15, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart church.
Goodbody's Blvd. Chapel

LENZ, Marie Teresa. Sister of Charles Malin, Martie Ellsworth, Evelyn Faucher and Geraldine Crawford. Requiem Mass, Dec. 12, Blessed Sacrament church.
Goodbody's Blvd. Chapel

LOPERENA, Sebastiana. Mother of Elizabeth Nava, step-mother of Josephine L. Cooper and John Loperena, sister of Julia Gonzalez and Valeriana Vitlavicencio, 8 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren. Requiem Mass, Dec. 10, St. John the Evangelist church.
Goodbody's Blvd. Chapel

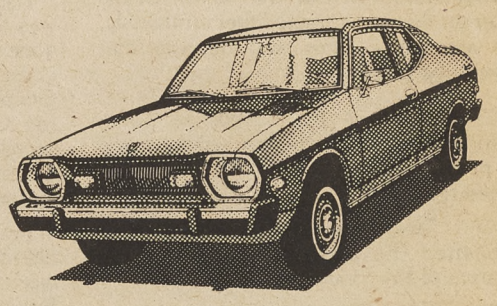
ZWOLINSKI, Robert Adam. Husband of Leta Zwolinski, brother of Richard Zwolinski, Florence Ellwanger and Helen Anderson. Requiem Mass, Dec. 13, St. Therese of the Child Jesus church.
Goodbody's Blvd. Chapel

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Insights in Faith: *Journey into Light*

Threats to Christianity



ST. DOMINIC—Founder of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans), he was born about 1170 in Spain. "By age 31, he was living a quiet life of study and intense prayer as Prior of Cathedral of Osma," Father John J. Castelot writes. "He later started a convent at Prouville and nearby he began to train preachers who would be both holy and learned. They were to be a task force, dedicated to prayer and virtue, which could go wherever there was need for preaching."—NC photo

No cold intellectual

Passionately in love with truth

By Father John J. Castelot

St Dominic, founder of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans), born about 1170 at Calaruega, in Castille, Spain, apparently was a member of the famous Gutman family, which gave several saints to the church. We know little of his early life, but he probably was born student.

At age 14, he went to study at Palencia, where he spent 10 years. During this period, he was made a canon of the Cathedral of Osma, and after ordination, became sub-prior of the Cathedral Chapter.

WHEN THE PRIOR, Diego, became bishop, Dominic succeeded him. All this while—until age 31—he lived a quiet life of study and intense prayer. There was no indication of the active carreer that was to unfold.

Then the king asked Diego to travel to Denmark to arrange a marriage for his son. Diego took Dominic. This was a fateful journey. They went through the Languedoc Region of Southern France, a hotbed of Albigensian heresy.

Dominic was horrified, He spent one whole night dialoguing with their heretical host, finally convincing him of his error—a forecast of things to come.

BACK FROM Denmark, he and Diego asked the Pope to send them as missionaries to Russia. However, there were more pressing needs in Languedoc. On the way back from Rome, they met the two Cistercians who were waging a fruitless campaign against the Albigensians. Dominic and Diego diagnosed the reason for their failure.

As papal legates, the Cistercians went about their mission encumbered by the trappings of officialdom, riding on fine horses, attended by a retinue of servants, doing everything to undermine their credibility. For the heresy they were attempting to stamp out was more then heresy; it was basically a subtle, pernicious philosophical system, a revival of ancient Gnosticism.

It held for two irreconcilable principles of good and evil, spirit and matter, with everything material being intrinsically evil. Hence the Incarnation was unthinkable, the sacraments unacceptable. The idea was to abstain as completely as possible from things material, from sexual intercourse, however licit, from food and drink. Suicide was the ultimate heroic act.

SUCH A system could be countered only by an equally radical—but more reasonable—living out of the gospel ideal in heroic fashion. Only men who did this could attract converts. Dominic gave and followed this advice.

His first practical step was to found a convent at Prouville for women who had abjured the heresy and returned to the church. Nearby was a house for his helpers. Here he trained preachers who would be both holy and learned.

After 10 years, he felt a need for structure. He had in mind a mobile task force that could go wherever the need for preaching called them. Like the monks they would dedicate themselves to a life of virtue and prayer, but in addition, even holding higher priority, they would concentrate on study and preaching—an innovation in his day.

HE FINALLY obtained permission from Pope Honorius III. While in Rome, he met Francis of Assisi. They were different from each other in many ways, yet so much alike. Together they saved the Church in an era of extreme peril.

Dominic realized that the combat facing the church would be waged in the realm of the intellect. The philosophical subtlety of the Albigensian error convinced him of that. Consequently, his houses were houses of unending study, centers of a learned apostolate. And the movement grew apace.

Just weeks before Dominic's death in 1221, there were 60 such convents in Providence, Spain, France, Lombardy, Rome, England, Germany and Hungary. Fifty years later there were 320 centers with four new provinces in Poland, Scandinavia, Greece and Palestine. In the area where the Albigensians once held sway, there were 140 convents.

EVEN THOUGH study and preaching were emphasized, mortification and prayer were not neglected. Abstinence from meat was perpetual. On Fridays, vigils of important feasts, and every day from Sept. 14 to Easter, only one meal was eaten. The friars slept in a common dormitory and observed almost complete silence.

However, Dominic's good sense and appreciation of priorities are reflected in the system of dispensations built into the rule. When a given austerity conflicted with the primary purpose of the order, the superior not only could, but was obliged to dispense from it.

The spirit of the order is an image of Dominic's personality. he was passionately in love with truth and the spread of truth. But far from being a cold intellectual, he had a great heart filled with sympathy, enthusiasm, compassion.

He was asked once in what book he had studied his sermon. "In no other," he answered, "than in that of love."

Heretics: Dissent and revolts in Christendom

By Father Alred McBride, O Pream

Heretics were not suffered gladly in the medieval church. Official Christianity refused to tolerate them and treated them ruthlessly. Here are some dates and decrees that illustrate the point:

1163—Decree of the council of Tours demanded that heretics be tracked down and their property confiscated. In England it was decreed that their houses be destroyed.

1215—The fourth Lateran Council established the policies that led to the formation of the Inquisition in 1231.

1231—Torture appears in heresy trials.

1252—The use of the rack is prescribed for those suspected of heresy.

1479—The famed Spanish Inquisition begins, motivated by both political and religious reasons.

The record is grisly, embarrassing and reprehensible. So much of this echoes what today we would call the police state. Once upon a time the Christians were willing to be martyrs for Christ. Now some of them assumed the role of Inquisitors, killing and torturing others for their personal beliefs.

HOW COULD all this have happened? It was the result of two well intentioned ideas gone sour. At its basis was the ideal of a social order built around the moral principles of the Gospel. Augustine outlined the philosophy in the **City of God.** He described the ideal social order in which religion witnesssed to Christ's values and the State devised laws and social procedures to reflect them.

From the fourth to the 12th century, the church lived with the Augustinian dream, working to create a just and loving society. But instead of allowing a creative coexistence between itself and the State, it grew in power and refused to give it up.

In the Dark Ages, the church willingly assumed many of the secular tasks to help create and improve society. When it would have been proper to hand over to the State its proper functions, the church could not let go.

THE RESULT was theocracy in which the church ruled both religious and secular matters. The outcome was an obsession with power, incorrectly justified by Augustine's teachings.

Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. The proverb applies to church people as well as anyone else. In reaction to this, a second good idea emerged and went sour. Utopians began preaching their ideal state.

It would be shorn of all the ecclesiastical trappings and uphold the purest human values. Was financial greed the problem? Then own nothing. Was lust a dilemma? Then abandon sex. Was tyranny the demon? Then exalt human freedom.

AT THE CORE of the Utopian critique was the humanist dream of personal freedom and conviction, relief from obsession with sex and liberation from the burden of possessions. If the misapplied idealism of Augustine led to tyranny and loss of freedom, the misapplied idealism of the humarist Utopians led to chaos and widespread public disorder.

It was out of the latter group that came the heretics. Since the church had the power for the time being, it instituted, along with the State's cooperation, formal drives against these chaotic threats to the public order in its financial, legal and ecclesiastical forms.

Seen in the light of the clash between two idealisms gone astray, one can perhaps understand, if not approve, the butchery that arose to resolve the problem. One group winds up enforcing moral values with the rack, the whip and the stake. The other group winds up supporting the abandonment of moral values altogether. One in the name of the Christian gospel. The other in the name of human potential.

THE PASSIONS eventually were mercifully spent. A new solution emerged, that of Christian humanism. How different Vatican II's Declaration on Religious Freedom sounds:

"Religious freedom has its foundation in the dignity of the human person, known both through God's Word and human reason...A man cannot freely seek the truth unless he is free from all types of pressure and force."

It took us a long time to learn this. Praise God that we have.

"Christianity is not a mere garment that western man can don or discard like a topcoat. It is the very fabric or his social and cultural being."—Francis X. Canfield, "The Catholic Bookman's Guide," ed. Sister M. Regis, I.H.M., 1962.

"It is not the proper duty of Christianity to form leaders—that is, builders of the temporal—although a legion of Christian leaders is infinitely desirable. Christianity must generate saints—that is, witnesses to the eternal."—Henri de Lubac, "Paradoxes," 1948.

"They (Christians) walk in humility and kindness, and falsehood is not found among them, and they love one another. They despise not the widow, and grieve not the orphan. He that hath distributeth liberally to him that hath not."—Aristeides, "Apology."

Hans Kueng

Outsider or a forerunner?



By William Ryan

Father Hans Kueng is not the only brilliant, original scholar in history, but he is one of few theologians who have, in their lifetimes, been best-selling authors.

Born March 19, 1928 in Sursee, Switzerland, he was the son of a local merchant. He studied in Rome, first at the German Pontifical College and later at the Gregorian University, where he received degrees in philosophy and theology. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1954.

IN 1957, at the Institut Catholique at the Sorbonne in Paris, Father Kueng published a doctoral dissertation on the noted Protestant theologian Karl Barth. The monumental treatise, which purported to find fundamental agreement between Barth's views and the church's teaching on the doctrine on justification, received high praise from Catholic and Protestant theologians. Karl Barth wrote the introduction. Father Kueng was on his way.

For the past 17 years, he has been professor of fundamental theology in the Catholic theological faculty of the University of Tuebingen.

In 1960, with a view to the forthcoming Second Vatican Council, he wrote the first of his books to be translated into five or more languages, **The Council, Reform and Reunion.** It was published here in 1962.

Father Kueng criticized what he saw as the "self-righteous splendid isolation" of the church from the leading intellectual currents of the age and said there could be no reunion between the Roman Catholic church and other churches without a thorough reform and renewal of Catholicism.

This book contained many ideas which have either been accomplished or seem hardly startling today. But in retrospect, it also seems to have sown the seeds for Father Kueng's growing challenge to the church's common understanding of its infallibility.

DURING FOLLOWING years, Father Kueng's challenge grew in intensity and magnitude. There were repeated expressions of concern from the Holy See. Finally, in 1975, the Vatican's Doctrinal Congregation issued a declaration solemnly warning him about his views—on papal infallibility, the priesthood, and the Eucharist—expressed in his book **Infallible? An Inquiry.**

His latest best seller, **On Being a Christian,** was strongly attacked twice in the space of three weeks by theologians who were interviewed on Vatican Radio. But Father Kueng countered that the book, intended to present the basics of Christianity to ordinary men in language they could understand, was written "not against, but for the church's magisterium," and his defenders said the book was responsible for bringing Catholics in some parts of Europe back the practice of their faith.

ON FEB. 21, 1977, Father Kueng wrote to Cardinal Joseph Hoeffner of Cologne, president of the German Bishops Conference. He declared that, contrary to what others may have thought, he never intended "to express doubts about the sonship of God in Jesus Christ or about the Holy Trinity."

But the German bishops responded, "The unclear, ambiguous statements of Father Kueng are so serious that the Conference must demand precise corrections and modifications." The priest said he would provide such explanations in a supplement to **On Being a Christian** which will be published next year.

Are Hans Kueng's views those of a theological outsider or is he in the vanguard? He raised that question, though not directly about himself, in his address at Georgetown University in Washington on Dec. 2, 1964.

"The outsider works, studies and fights on his own responsibility, so to speak and at his own risk. Without being particularly concerned about his connections with the main body he sets about building a road for himself on its flank.

"The church may perhaps pick up some suggestions and ideas from him, but she does not follow him along the path he has marked out....While the theological outsider works and studies and fights for the church on his own ground, the theologian of the vanguard does all this with the church behind him.

"It often takes a long time to settle whether a theologian is an outsider or a forerunner." And there, for the time being at least, is where the matter remains.

BIBLE READINGS AT MASS

Sunday, Dec. 25—Christmas

Vigil: Isaiah 62:1-5; Acts 13:16-17,22-25; Matthew 1:1-25 (13)
Midnight: Isaiah 9:2-7; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14 (14)
Dawn: Isaiah 62:11-12; Titus 3:4-7: Luke 2; 15-20 (15)
Day: Isaiah 52:7-10; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1;1-18 (16)

Christian Meditation

The interior company

By Father Jerome Bevilacqua, OSA

There are animals that tend to change their colors according to their environment. We, likewise, all have this tendency. We tend to imitate the people with whom we live. St. Paul says, "Bad friends ruin the noblest people." (1 Corinthians 15:33).

Our thoughts and feelings are very close companions and have penetrating influences, not only on our behavior, but also on whom we actually become. "A good man draws what is good from the store of goodness in his heart." (Luke 6:45).

OUR DELIBERATE thoughts and feelings act like wind and water on the contour of our personality. Each thought, each feeling to which we give consent forms the person we finally become: for our thoughts and feelings tend to draw the will along with them, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Mattthew 6:21).

Jesus was very careful of the interior company he kept: "In the morning, long before dawn, he got up and left the house, and went off to a lonely place and prayed there." (Mark 1:35).

In the Gospel according to Luke Jesus is portrayed as one who is in constant need of seeking the face of his Father: "Now once he was in a certain place praying, and when he had finished one of his disciples said, 'Lord, teach us to pray....' He said to them, 'Say this when you pray: "Father, may your name be held holy, your kingdom come."' (Luke 11:1,2).

IN FACT, Jesus' whole life is seen as an extension of the Father-Son relation that is nurtured by prayer: "Now it was about this time that he went out into the hills to pray; and he spent the whole night in prayer to God." (Luke 6:12)

Jesus remains united to his Father right down to the very end, "Then he withdrew from them, about a stone's throw away, and knelt down and prayed." (Luke 22:41) It is at this point, in his last will and testimony, that Jesus tells us, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." (John 14:9).

We have been made to the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26), but this is as much a task to be fulfilled as an already accomplished fact. "And we, who have been modelled on the earthly man, will be modelled on the heavenly man." (1 Corinthians 15:49).

THE FULFILLMENT of this promise often comes for us after long hours of looking at God and imitating what we see, very much as Jesus did while he was teaching us on earth: "She (wisdom) is a reflection of eternal light, untarnished mirror of God's active power, image of his goodness....she (wisdom) makes them friends of God...for God loves only the man who lives with wisdom." (Wisdom 7:26-28).

Wisdom for us is in the imitation of Jesus who is the Word of God (John 1:1), the radiant light of God's glory (Hebrews 1:3) and the Way (John 14:6).

The challenge of Christianity

Do we weaken its power from within?

By Beryl Newman

Is Christianity threatened today? Has it ever been threatened? Many of us, I suspect, would respond—at least initially—with a resounding "Yes."

But such a reaction would be more likely to reflect out own insecurity and fear than any real danger to Christianity itself. Certainly there are formidable factors abroad in the world that militate against the growth and exercise of Christianity, but there is nothing new in that.

CHRISITANITY HAS always existed in a hostile environment. It was born into it. From humble and defenseless beginnings in the stable at Bethlemem, it has been afflicted with misunderstanding and persecution; with minimization of its message; by the apparently endless tendency of humankind to idolatry and the enmity of those in pursuit of power.

In our own time of immediate and global communication, we are probably more aware than ever before of the extent and extremity of antagonism to the unremitting Christian imperative of personal reform.

Is it possible to ignore the widespread hatred and violence and disrespect for life—as long as it is not our own—or the exploitation and manipulation of people that is so much a part of our world?

WE WHO CALL ourselves Christian, may be forgiven for feeling appalled by the increasing danger of atheistic Marxism and the terrible incidences of genocide and human destruction in our time.

We may be forgiven horror at the callousness which can promote abortion, euthanasia and the death penalty in terms of national or personal convenience or economic desireability.

We may be forgiven outrage when ideals of patriotism and national security are so distorted as to justify murder and mental and physical torture, the perversion of technology and all manner of illegal—not to mention immoral—activities.

ANGER, PASSION, denunciation, we may be forgiven all these, but not fear, not doubt, not despair. If such manifestations of evil appear to us as threats to Christianity, we are looking through the wrong end of the telescope.

From the Christian perspective, these things are not threats, but challenges to be faced and overcome. If we are to speak of threat at all in this context, it should be of Christianity as the overwhelming threat to all that is evil.

It is because of the presence of such evil that Christianity exists, not in spite of it. From the start of his public life, Jesus asserted himself as the "stronger one" who defeats the strength of the "evil one" (Luke 11: 14-22).

HE TOLD his disciples not to fear the world, nor the "prince of the world" and warned them of the hatred and persecution they would encounter. "Have confidence! It is the world I have conquered," He said.

Christians share this victory, but with our myopic vision, it is not always easy to convince ourselves during the struggle that the battle has already been won! We need constantly to guard and sustain the confidence that all things can be overcome by the power of the Holy Spirit. We need always to be reassured that, despite apparent evidence to the contrary, God is in control and his goodness must triumph.

By its very nature, Christianity cannot be threatened by elements external to it. If it is threatened at all, it is from within. We who claim to be Christian can do more harm to Christianity than demonic legions, when what we do and are mocks Christ.

WHATEVER CHRISTIANITY means to us who claim it, to those outside—and many within our churches—its meaning is translated only in the Christians they meet. For too many generations, in too many instances, what they have found in us has been in contradiction to Jesus of Nazareth.

Why, almost 2,000 years after the death and rising of Christ and the passage through the world of millions upon millions of Christians, have we made so little impact that the world is in the state of moral decline and almost universal conflict it is today?

Not because Christianity does not have the power—is not the greatest power known to man—to transform men and structures! But Christ laid the foundations of a church that would be a sign of contradiction in the world, not one that would assume its protective coloring.

THE HISTORY of Christian people has not been one to do credit to the Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount, who spoke of gentleness and purity of motive, nor to the Jesus who cried "Let them see you are my disciples by your love."

If it were possible for Christianity to fail—and it is not—its failure would be due, not to any inherent weakness, but because, as G.K. Chesterton once said, it has never really been tried.

If Christianity is threatened, we do not need to don shield and buckler and sally forth to contest with windmills of evil. Alas, we need only look within ourselves!

Christmas unconstitutional?

How real is the threat to Christian feast celebrations?

By Joseph E. Duerr
News editor, The Record, diocesan newspaper of Louisville, Ky.

It may well come to pass in this country that Christmas will be declared unconstitutional. And maybe even Easter, too.

Nonsense, you say! "How could any sensible or reasonable person say such a thing? Or even contend such a thing is possible?"

Well, any sensible or reasonable person would not attempt to argue that Christmas or Easter stand in conflict with the U.S. Constitution. But there are enough nonsensical and unreasonable people around to raise the issue.

FOR EXAMPLE:

Recently, Florida'a public schools were advised by the state education commission to keep Christ out of their Christmas observances.

State commissioner Ralph Turlington—in interpreting U.S. and Florida Supreme Court decisions—told school officials, "The birth, crucifixion or resurrection of Christ constitute a form of religious teaching and are therefore unconstitutional."

There's also been a dispute brewing in Texas over Christmas activities in public schools. A parent filed a suit which contends, among other things, that Christmas activities, like the singing of carols in public schools, should be stopped.

THE EASTER SEASON has also come under attack. In 1975 a California court ruled that the closing of state offices for three hours on Good Friday is unconstitutional.

In 1974 a federal judge in Florida said it is unconstitutional to schedule public school spring holidays around the Easter weekend.

None of these issues have been directly decided by the U.S. Supreme Court. But if the Christmas and Easter opponents keep their campaigns alive, it would not be surprising to see the high court sit in judgement some day on Christmas and Easter.

One would think people would have better things to do than spend time constructing a legal case against religious holidays. But the way some minds work, nothing is surprising.

THE BASIC BONE of contention against Christmas and Easter is that no public agency (be it public schools or state, local or federal governments) has any business promoting religion in any way.

And since Christmas and Easter are religious events—and Christian observances at that—nonbelievers and non-Christians are discriminated against. This discrimination, people argue, violates the separation between the church and state clause of the First Amendment.

RECENT SUPREME COURT decisions have contributed to this argument. The court has said the First Amendment prohibits "excessive entanglement" between church and state. So isn't there "excessive entanglement" when a public school puts up a Nativity scene or has its students sing "Silent Night?"

Of course, no one has yet made a big case of the other side of the coin: that the consequence of this argument is the promotion of secularism. And secularism is a religion of sorts, since it is a system of doctrines and practices that rejects any form of religious faith or worship.

Before all this gets out of hand (if it hasn't already) it is time that reasonable and sensible people take control and bring the country back to sanity. This involves:

FIRST, applying some basic common sense to what the U.S. Constitution means. The First Amendment was not intended to destroy religious practices or religious traditions but to protect them. The amendment specifically guarantees religious freedom—and what better example of this is a religious feast like Christmas or Easter?

It is one thing for government to require all people to celebrate Christmas or Easter and to require people to profess a certain religious belief.

But it is quite another thing to forbid government to cooperate with people in celebrating a religious feast or to recognize the historical significance of a holiday that has religious roots.

SECOND, it's important to put the freedom of religion clause of the First Amendment on equal footing with the church-state separation clause. Right now, there is an imbalance, with church-state separation holding the edge.

A year of questions for church

From page 1

Catholics and clergy, participants were urged to contribute Hispanic traditions and values to the Church, especially in the areas of family life and human dignity of the individual, and to promote bilingual education as a springboard to better social and economic conditions.

Media events were major news stories during 1977, as TV programs like "Roots" and "Jesus of Nazareth" drew praise from church leaders, while ABC-TV's new series "SOAP" was the subject of much criticism, inside the church and out.

The Teamsters Union and the United Farm Workers of America signed a jurisdictional pact in March, ending a decade of strife and violence within farm labor.

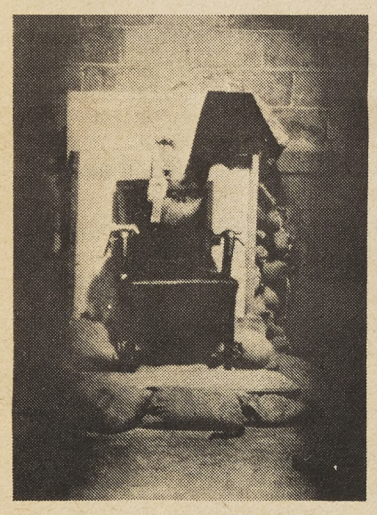
MAJOR PERSONALITIES in the news in 1977 included Irish Peace People Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan, two Catholic women who won the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts to bring peace to Northern Ireland; and Archbishop Joseph Howze, who became the first black to head a U.S. diocese in modern times when he was named bishop of Biloxi, Miss.

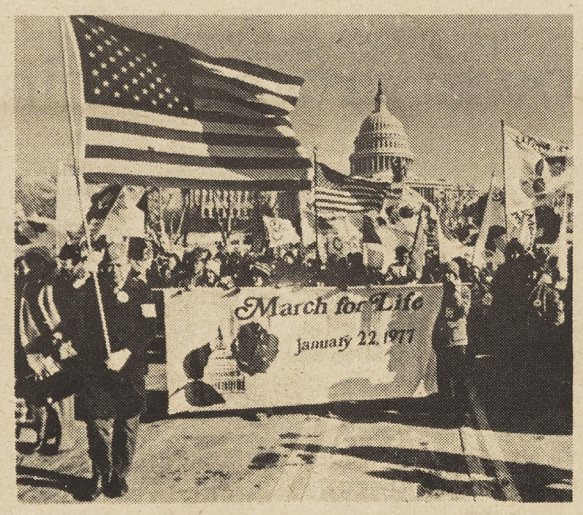
Archbishop John Quinn of San Francisco became president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the U.S. Catholic Conference in November, succeeding Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin of Cincinnati. Bishop Thomas Kelly was named this year as NCCB-USCC general secretary.

It was a year of questions, with one final one as 1977 ebbed away: Will 1978 provide more answers?









LIFE AND DEATH—The right to life movement became more militant in 1977. One women even chained herself to an operating table in a Washington clinic and arrests were made in several cities after demonstrators entered abortion clinics. The annual March for Life in Washington drew its largest participation, 40,000 in January. During the same week Gary Gilmore became the first person in more than a decade to be executed for a crime, shot in this chair at the Utah State Prison.—NC photos

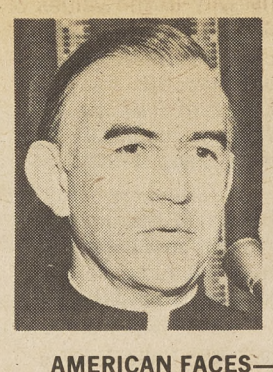




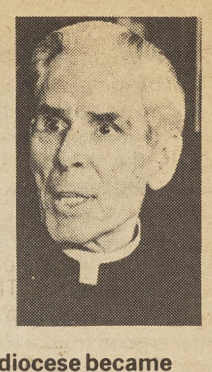












AMERICAN FACES—Jimmy Carter was inaugurated in January and almost immediately began speaking out for human rights throughout the world. One of his top appointees, HEW Secretary Joseph Califano (top right), a Catholic, opposed using federal funds for abortion and another appointee, Msgr. Geno Baroni (center left), undersecretary for Housing and Urban Development, became the first priest to hold a cabinet-level post. Singer Bing Crosby, a Catholic, died in October and was buried from St. Paul the Apostle church, Los Angeles. Bishop Joseph Howze of Biloxi, Miss., diocese became the nation's first black ordinary of this century. Archbishop John Quinn of San Francisco (bottom left), a former auxiliary of San Diego diocese, was elected president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Bishop Thomas Kelly (bottom center) was ordained a bishop as he became general secretary for the Conference succeeding Bishop James Rausch, in front of him, who became bishop of Phoenix. Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen (bottom right) underwent and recovered from heart surgery.—NC





YEARS EVENTS—The Segundo Encuentro in Washington focused attention on the concerns of Spanish-speaking people. Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their peace movement in Northern Ireland which received wide acclaim.—NC photos

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Bureaucratic 'insensitivity'

'Let us bury our baby'

By Al Antczak

LOS ANGELES (NC)—A Glendale couple experienced what a priest called "gross insensitivity to their religious rights and freedom of conscience" after their unborn child died in its mother's womb recently.

Father Helmut Hefner of the Los Angeles Archdiocesan Matrimonial Tribunal made the allegation after helping Pete and Carol Cortez in their fight to acquire the dead child's body from the hospital where it was delivered.

WHEN THE couple learned that the child they were expecting in March had died, Mrs. Cortez entered Women's Hospital Dec. 1 to undergo induction of labor. Before entering the hospital,they had made arrangements with Father Hefner to conduct graveside services at the child's burial.

Following delivery of the dead child, the hospital staff refused to turn the body over to the parents, saying that the gestation period had been only 16 weeks and that 22 weeks was the minimum time for which a death certificate could be issued.

Without a death certificate, the couple was told, there was no procedure available for them to acquire the body.

CORTEZ SPENT the entire following day pleading with hospital officials to release the body, but they told him he had no recourse.

Cortez left the hospital dismayed, and contacted Father Hefner that evening for advice. The following day, Dec. 3, both men went to the hospital to resume the fight for the baby's body.

"The conversation was just incredible," said Father Hefner. "We were repeatedly told that this fetus was just like some amputated arm or leg."

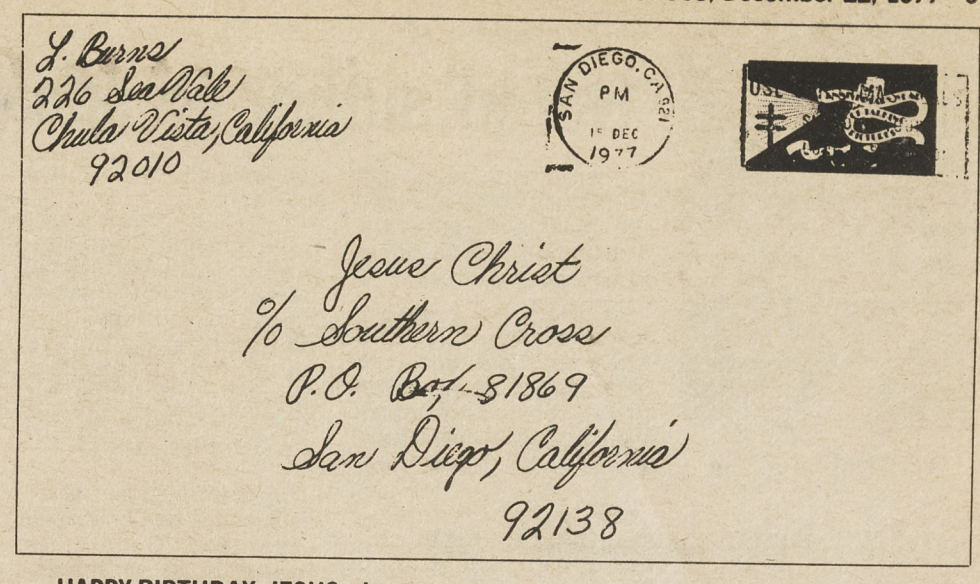
THEY WERE told, the priest continued, that it would do no good to seek legal counsel, "because 'it had been processed through pathology,' and it would be almost impossible to locate it. By the time any legal action could be taken, the pathology would have disposed of the fetus."

On Dec. 5, Father Hefner contacted the Los Angeles County Health Department, where an official said the parents had the right to claim the child's body. The hospital then agreed.

"The final indignity," said Father Hefner, "came when the father was sent to a guard station at the hospital entrance. There he was asked to sign a receipt, and was given his baby in a cardboard box wrapped in brown paper."

FATHER HEFNER was present when the box was opened to reveal the tiny body in a jar. "Just look at it," Cortez said. "How can they tell me this is not a child?"

The Cortez' daughter was buried in San Fernando Mission Cemetery.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JESUS—Letters are addressed to Santa at the North Pole and now the Southern Cross is getting Jesus' mail. The envelope contained a birthday card for Jesus with this verse: "Gee, it's the anniversary of your birth. The enchanting moment that has brought smiles to hundreds of people and warmed so many hearts, especially mine. Happy Birthday." Dated Dec. 25, 1977, and signed "I love you, Lorraine Burns."

Parish renewal in Ontario

ONTARIO—Father Emery Tang, the well known Franciscan speaker and communications expert, will direct a parish renewal program "Come to life" at St. George church here.

The renewal called "Christianity on prime time" will be held from Jan. 21 through 27, according to Father Donald Webber, pastor.

IN ADDITION to homilies at all weekend masses, Father Tang will give talks on the weekdays every morning at 11 a.m. and every evening at 7 p.m.

Father Tang, a native of Phoenix. Ariz., has made numerous appearances on radio and television, including well known talk shows.

HIS OPENESS to change, his humor and insights put him in demand as a speaker, and much of his time is taken these days with lectures, workshops and renewal sessions.

His "Yul Brynner" appearance has made him a familiar figure at religious education congresses and meetings.

Masses for Indians

In the SC article on Mission Indians (Dec. 8) it was stated that no mass had been celebrated in Viejas reservation since last Easter.

Although, it is true, no Sunday masses were celebrated during that time, Father Walshe Murray, of Alpine, informs us that mass was celebrated in Viejas chapel on the feast of the Nativity, Sept. 8 and for a funeral on Aug. 13.

Father Murray started weekly masses in November in both Viejas and Sycuan reservations.

Survey reflects

Promoting quality marriages growing concern of dioceses

WASHINGTON (NC)—The overwhelming majority of dioceses responding to a U.S. Catholic Conference (USCC) survey said they either have or are planning to have a common marriage preparation policy at this time.

HOWEVER, 55 percent of the policies deal only with exceptional cases, such as pregnancy, marriages of minors and other special conditions.

Common policies are meant to coordinate marriage preparation programs within a diocese or a group of dioceses. They are designed to help minister more effectively to engaged couples.

The survey was conducted by Father Donald Conroy, USCC family life representative, in conjunction with the Family Life Directors' Committee on Marriage Preparation and Common Policy.

A MAJORITY—62 percent—of dioceses responding to the survey are in the Midwest and Far West. A report issued by the pollsters said the respondents represented a "good cross-section" of rural, urban and suburban dioceses.

According to the report, the results show "a sharp upturn of interest and concern for promoting quality marriages." In 1974, the report said, only 16 dioceses had a common marriage policy.

Father Conroy said the trend reflects "a greater sensitivity to the values of sacramental marriage" and concern about the increasing divorce rate among Catholics.

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Dr. Harold O.J. Brown

At dinner Jan. 14

Noted author to speak for life

A well-known author and professor of theology will be the main speaker at the sixth annual pro-life dinner to be held in January.

Dr. Harold O.J. Brown, author of "The Protest of a Troubled Protestant" and other books, and associate professor of systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Ill., will be the speaker.

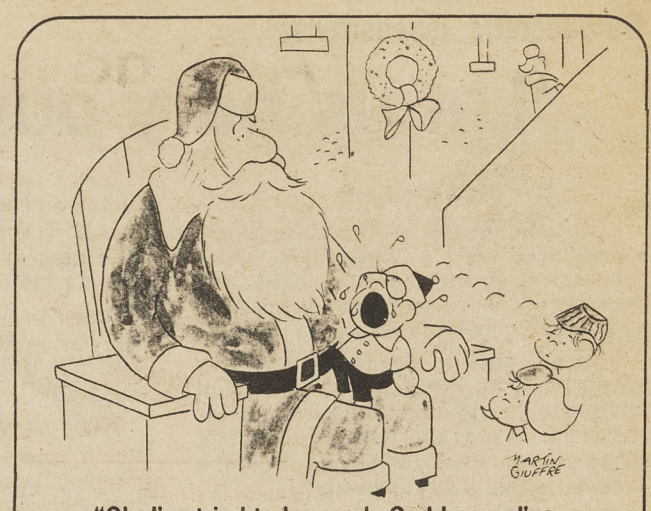
The dinner, which has provided an annual restatement of pro-life aims through noted speakers, will be held at the Holiday Inn at the Embarcadero (formerly Royal Inn of the Wharf), San Diego, at 7:45 p.m. Saturday, Jan, 14.

Dr. Brown, former associate editor of Christianity Today and Human Life Review, is also a spokesman for the pro-life Christian Action Council, Washington, DC.

The dinner helps to raise funds for the voluntary work of the San Diego Pro-life League, which operates the 583-LIFE hotline for pregnancy and other problems.

Tickets for the dinner may be obtained by calling 283-3741 or 453-2206. Reservations are $18 per person.

Dinner chairman is Margaret Witt and Joe Fischer is president of the league. A reception precedes the dinner at 6:30 p.m.



"Oh, I've tried to be good...God knows I've tried!"

Sign magazine

Slide show available on Hispanic culture, struggles

WASHINGTON (NC)—An audio-visual package emphasizing both the cultural contributions of U.S. Hispanics and their struggles for justice has been developed by the Secretariat for the Spanish Speaking of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops-U.S. Catholic Conference (NCCB-USCC).

The presentation, which is entitled "Nosotros Hispanos" and subtitled "A Story of Pain and Promise," was produced by the USCC Office of Creative Services.

It includes 128 slides, an audio cassette in Spanish and English, a bilingual Leader Handbook with suggestions for presentation, discussion and group activities related to the production's message, and a bilingual synchronization script.

The audiovisual package is available at $50 plus $5 shipping cost from NCCB-USCC Secretariat for the Spanish Speaking, 1312 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

Crash course in Hispanic language, culture for priests

A crash course for priests in the Hispanic, Indian and barrio culture and language is available during January at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles.

Called a pastoral language institute, the program runs from Jan. 3 through Jan. 27.

It aims to give priests sufficient knowledge of the language and culture to administer the sacraments, celebrate the eucharist and deliver a written homily in Spanish.

Cost is $600 for room and board and tuition, with a $20 registration fee. Father Edward Beltran of the Spanish-speaking secretariat of the U.S. Catholic Conference is a member of the faculty.

Further details from Leo Levitt at Loyola Marymount University, or Father Peter Garcia at Los Angeles archdiocesan offices.

A look at books

KING OF KINGS by Malcolm Saville. Our Sunday Visitor Press, Noll Plaza, Huntington, IN 46750. 168 pages, $6.95.

Do you ever get sick and tired of the learned biblical scholars who haggle over every point in the life of Christ? They throw around Greek and Hebrew characters and nit-pick over every gospel verse. They are probably a necessary evil, but they seldom build up the living faith.

Now, Malcolm Saville has written a life of Christ, especially for young adults, which simply tells the story of the four gospels in one running account. He isn't trying to display his own learning and dazzle us all. He lets the Christ-story come through.

The infancy accounts are harmonized. The hidden life as Christ grew up is mentioned. His miracles, parables, and teachings are simply recounted. The Paschal Mysteries—the Pasion, death and resurrection of Christ—are recounted with all their loving attention to detail.

This is a devotional life of Christ that all of us can enjoy just because we, too, are a faith community which proclaims Christ as God, man, and savior. I hope Malcolm Saville will write many more biblical books for our spiritual profit. May his tribe increase! **Father Charles Dollen**

Your SC vacation

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The special service for vacations at inexpensive rates but excellent hotels, is offered to SC readers for 1978.

Following are vacations for which you can plan:

Hawaii ---------- Jan. 11-23 (Fully booked)
Mazatlan ---------- April 18-25
Orient ---------- July 12-29
Guadalajara ---------- Aug. 1-8.

Full details will be given in January issues of the Southern Cross. Plan to go on one of these excellent vacation trips.

On the screens

The Turning Point—a kind of "all about Eve" done with a ballet instead of a theatrical background.

Shirley MacLaine and Anne Bancroft play two long-time friends and rivals. The film is immensly entertaining, thanks to some fine acting and some stunning ballet sequences even if it is nothing more then relatively high-class soap opera.

The film's benign attitude towards illicit sex restricts, what would otherwise be a fine general audience film, to mature viewers. **For adults.** (PG)

TV movies include **The Bible** (Dec. 23, CBS, 8 p.m.)—this film adaptation of the Book of Genesis, from the story of creation to Abraham, is reverent in its interpretation and is richly entertaining. **For all.**

Come Back Little Sheba (Dec. 31, NBC, 9 p.m.)—William Inge's best play, a moving portrayal of a middle-aged couple who are failures at life. Laurence Olivier and Joanne Woodward give fascinating performances.

TV programs include **The Fourth King** (Dec. 23, NBC, 8:30 p.m.)—animated story of how the animal kingdom discovers and celebrates the birth of Christ.

Christmas Around the World (Dec. 24, PBS, 1 p.m.)—originating live from seven countries, segments include Christmas Eve mass at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. (Repeats at 8 p.m. on KPBS-15, San Diego).

Christmas Rome 1977 (Dec. 24, NBC, midnight)—Pope Paul's midnight mass from St. Peter's Basilica.

NC News

Show notes...

Missa Brevis in C by Mozart, St. Brigid parish choir, accompanied by Otto Feld string quintet and trumpets, midnight mass, Christmas Eve, St. Brigid church, Pacific Beach.

Sing your praise to him, TV mass for shut-ins, Bishop Leo T. Maher, celebrant, 7:30 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 25 and Jan. 1, KCST-39, San Diego.

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Around the diocese

Bishop Leo T. Maher:

Sunday, Dec. 25, 12:01 a.m., St. Joseph Cathedral, San Diego, midnight mass of Christmas.

Bishop Gilbert E. Chavez:

Sunday, Dec. 25, 12:01 a.m., Our Lady of Guadalupe church, San Bernardino, midnight mass of Christmas.

Father Daniel Dillabough
Secretary

The deadline for Around the diocese is six days before the desired date of publication. The deadline for Southern Cross issue of January 5, is Friday, December 30.

Knights of Columbus New Year's Eve dinner-dance, with social hour preceding, 7 p.m.-1 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 31, San Miguel Hall, Lemon Grove. $25 per couple. Details and reservations by Dec. 20: 466-5869 or 465-4308.

Principals of Christian living using scripture, 9:45-11:30 a.m. Fridays, St. Therese parish social center, San Diego, taught by Mrs. Pat Kankowski.

Mass signed for the deaf, 11:30 a.m. Sundays, St. Pius X church, 36 E. Naples St., Chula Vista.

Motivation workshop, sponsored by the Office of Adult Religious Education, featuring Dr. John Swanke, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday Jan. 21, St. Vincent de Paul parish, San Diego. Details: 231-0601.

"Lecture series, "Youth and Religion Today: Ecumenical Problems and Possibilities," by the Rev. Jack Lindquist, 7:30 p.m. Thursdays, Jan. 5, 12, 26, St. Therese Social Center, San Diego.

Women's retreat, El Carmelo Retreat House, Jan. 6-8. Details: 440-1827 for El Cajon; 454-6075, La Jolla; 422-8013, Chula Vista, and 469-2287, San Diego.

St. Martin's Women's Club, is sponsoring a bus tour to Las Vegas, Feb. 15-17. Details: 466-5587.

New Year's Eve dinner-dance, 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 31, Our Lady of Solitude parish auditorium, Palm Springs. Details: 325-3816.

New Year's Eve Party, buffet dinner and dancing to live music, 8:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 31, St. Pius X parish hall, Chula Vista. $10 with proceeds going to the parish school. Details: 421-8122.

Diploma Program in Religious Education, courses in catechetics, psychological and moral development, morality, fundamental theology and Old Testament, winter session begins in mid-January. Details: Sister Josephine Breen, 297-7110.

Diocesan Office of Adult Religious Education has moved to Catholic Community Services Building, 349 Cedar St., San Diego. New number: 231-0601. Staff: Father Gary C. Rye, OSA director; Peggy Wehe, assistant director; and Estela Gonzalez, secretary.

Scripture study, 7:30 p.m. Mondays, St. Vincent de Paul parish hall, San Diego, taught by Father Jerome Bevilacqua, OSA.

San Diego musical ministry to the elderly is seeking musicians to play at convalescent and retirement homes. Details: 286-7573 or 583-8219.

First Friday Devotions, benediction, adoration and rosary, 7:30 p.m. Jan. 6, St. Mary Magdalene church, San Diego. Details: 276-3693.

First Saturday mass in honor of Our Lady of Fatima, with rosary and Fatima prayers after mass, 8 a.m. Jan. 7, St. Mary Magdalene church, San Diego. Details: 276-3693.

Ladies of the Immaculata meeting, program "Self Improvement with John Robert Powers," 7:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 9, Immaculata church sacristy, USD campus.

Archconfraternity of St. Joseph Cathedral, mass, 9 a.m. Sunday, Jan. 8, followed by breakfast in Cathedral Plaza, San Diego.

Western Vocation Directors Association annual convention, Jan. 16-19, Mater Dolorosa Retreat House, Sierra Madre, Calif. Details: Father Charlie Motsko, OSM, (714) 776-1031.

Women's retreat for Corona, Norco, Rialto, Twentynine Palms, Highland, Hemet and Needles residents, Jan. 13-15, El Carmelo Retreat House, Redlands

Men's retreat for Colton, Fontana and Alta Loma residents, Jan. 20-22, El Carmelo Retreat House, Redlands.

Serra Club, mass and meeting, noon, Wednesday, Dec. 28, St. Francis Seminary chapel, San Diego, lunch following at Padre Trail Inn.

New Year's Eve dinner-dance, Saturday, Dec. 31, St. Peter and St. Paul parish center, Alta Loma, dancing to music of Berger Brothers. $25 per couple. Details: 987-5213.

Mass with special prayers for healing, 7:30 p.m., first, third and fifth Tuesdays of the month beginning Jan. 3; scripture class, second and fourth Tuesdays, offered by Father Jerome Bevilacqua, OSA, Mary Star of the Sea, La Jolla.

New Year's Eve dinner-dance, Knights of Columbus, Council No. 4017, 7:30 p.m.-1 a.m., Father Michael A. Keane Hall, Colton, music by Fred's Country Affair. Paid reservations of $7.50 per person by Dec. 24.

First Friday mass, Stalpar Club, 7 p.m., Jan. 6, Immaculata church, USD campus, discussion following at 3171 Clairemont Dr., No. 1. Reservations by Jan. 4: Virginia Freeman, 276-7644.

Stalpar Club monthly meeting, 5 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 8, St. Joseph Cathedral Club, San Diego. Cash donations to Benedictine sisters.

Afro-American Liturgy Workshop, featuring black liturgist Grayson Warren Brown, Jan. 13-15, St. Rita church, San Diego. $20 registration fee to: Diocesan Commission for Black Catholics, P.O. Box 5731, San Diego, CA 92105.

Court Immaculata, No. 1854, CDA, meeting, 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 4, St. Mary Magdalene parish hall, San Diego.

"Christmas Fun and Faith," one-day Bible program for pre-school (4 years old) through junior high youngsters, 9 a.m.-noon, Wednesday, Dec. 28, a Christmas pageant, "The Friendly Beasts," performed by the children, 7:30 p.m., Sacred Heart parish auditorium, Ocean Beach. Details: 222-8013 or 222-9304.

Bible Study, for Catholic Singles Club, 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 22, Our Lady of Refuge, 4212 Jewell St., Pacific Beach, San Diego.

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The Southern Cross is looking for a journalist for an editoral position. Catholic background, with ability to layout pages, edit copy, use camera and write. Knowledge of Spanish an advantage. Write or call: P.O. Box 81869, San Diego, CA 92138. (298-7713). TFN

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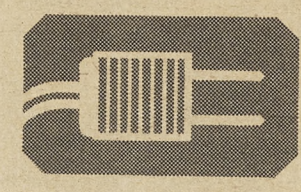
Not real ones.

So here are a few holiday safety tips from SDG&E.

More fires break out at Christmas time than any other time of year. Most can be prevented. But many are caused by faulty Christmas lighting, and carelessness with holiday cooking. So, be on the safe side, read these holiday safety tips. Cut along the dotted line and pin them up where everyone in the family will see and read them. Entertain friends and family, not the fire brigade.

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HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS



While you're waiting for Santa, look for worn out wiring.

Octopus outlets have no place in your holiday plans. In short, don't put all your Christmas plugs in one outlet, or you may have a very short Christmas.



Don't use indoor fixtures or lights outside. Be sure they're UL approved for use outdoors. Rain, dew and moisture can cause shorts and leave Santa in a fine fix.

Don't hang wires over TV antennas or guy wires for TV antennas or any other outdoor wiring. A home that's a blaze of decorative lights is one thing. A home that's ablaze is quite another.



If you have an electric range, make sure it's clean and free of grease before you start your heavy holiday cooking.

If you have a gas range, make sure the burners are cleaned and there is no grease or other materials on the burners that could ignite.

Check the range pilot light to make certain there is no grease or other matter clogging it.

Watch open flames on the gas range carefully to make sure no curtains, towels, pot holders, aprons or other materials could possibly be blown on or near the flame.



If you have a fireplace, don't forget to open the damper before you start a fire. Make sure that there is nothing flammable placed near the fireplace. That goes for both gas fireplace logs and natural wood logs.



Don't wait for Santa to bring you a portable fire extinguisher. Get one well in advance of Christmas, and keep it handy.